

## Message Text

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11  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

MCT-01 DHA-02 /073 W  
----- 007442

R 260635Z SEP 76  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9728  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6461

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE, PLO  
SUBJECT: DISSIDENT FATAH GROUP CALLS FOR OUSTER OF PRESENT  
FATAH LEADERSHIP

1. EMBASSY EMPLOYEE FOUND CIRCULAR ON STREET NEAR HIS HOME  
SEPT. 22 WHICH HAD APPARENTLY BEEN DISTRIBUTED PREVIOUS NIGHT.  
ISSUED BY GROUP CALLING ITSELF "STRUGGLE COUNCIL FOR PALESTINE  
NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT (FATAH)" AND DATED SEPT. 1976,  
DOCUMENT ACCUSES CURRENT FATAH LEADERSHIP OF CRIMINAL  
CONDUCT IN LEBANON AND OF ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECRET  
PROMISES FOR FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE DELIVERED TO FATAH BY  
U.S. THROUGH SADAT. IT STRESSES NEED FOR CLOSE TIES WITH  
SYRIA, AND CONCLUDES WITH APPEAL FOR GENERAL FATAH CONFERENCE  
TO CHOOSE NEW LEADERSHIP.

2. DOCUMENT CHARGES THAT "LEADERSHIP HAS INVOLVED ITSELF, AND  
DRAGGED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT ALONG WITH IT, INTO ALLIANCES  
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WITH KAMAL JUMBLATT AND HIS FEUDALIST AND POLITICAL

AMBITIONS, THUS PUTTING PALESTINIAN CAUSE INTO THIS LOSING EQUATION. IT HAS ALSO BECOME CLEAR BEYOND DOUBT THAT THIS LEADERSHIP HAS RECEIVED AN AMERICAN-SADATI PROMISE THAT ISRAEL WILL CONCEDE SOME OF OUR LAND TO IT SO THAT IT WOULD ESTABLISH A WEAK AND SUBMISSIVE PUPPET STATE. IT HAS THUS BEEN DECIDED TO FORM A STRUGGLE COUNCIL, THAT WOULD EMBRACE STRUGGLING BROTHERS FROM FATAH PROMPTED BY THEIR POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND REVOLUTIONARY DUTY TO COUNTER THIS LEADERSHIP, WHICH HAS BECOME BURDEN SHOULDERED BY FATAH AND WHOLD PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT, AND TO DISMISS IT AND HOLD IT RESPONSIBLE FOR THINGS IT HAS DONE TO PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND CAUSE. (STRUGGLE COUNCIL HOPES TO) PAVE WAY FOR HOLDING OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL CONFERENCE OF FATAH, FROM WHICH WOULD COME NEW LEADERSHIP THAT WOULD WORK TO ESTABLISH PALESTINIAN UNITY ON FIRMER BASES, STRENGTHEN SYRO-PALESTINIAN COHESION AND FORM NATIONAL STRUGGLE FRONT AMONG ALL ARAB FORCES HOSTILE TO ZIONISM AND AMERICAN IMPERIALISM"

3. IMMEDIATE REACTION OF LEFTIST AL-BAATH NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENT WHOM EMBOFF QUERIED ON PAMPHLET WAS APPARENT SURPRISE AND REJOINDER THAT "IT MUST HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY KHALID FAHUM'S FACTION." ON OTHER HAND, SOURCE WITH ACCESS TO FAHUM, TOLD US RECENTLY THAT TWO WEEKS AGO FAHUM HAD BEEN VISITED BY HIGH-LEVEL SYRIAN COMMUNIST (CPS) DELEGATION TO INVESTIGATE REPORT THAT SYRIA INTENDED TO REPLACE PLO EXCOMM LEADER YASIR ARAFAT WITH TRIUMVIRATE CONSISTING OF FAHUM, ZUHAYR MUHSIN AND THIRD PALESTINIAN OFFICIAL. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, FAHUM DENIED THESE RUMORS AND IN ADDITION REMINDED DELEGATION THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURAL OBSTACLES TO CONVENING CONFERENCE TO ELECT NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD PROVE INSURMOUNTABLE.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE FAHUM'S REPORTED DENIAL, RUMORS OF SARG PLANS TO REPLACE CURRENT PLO LEADERSHIP WERE APPARENTLY TAKEN SERIOUSLY ENOUGH BY CPS TO MOTIVATE THEIR VISIT TO HIM. ACCORDING TO OUR READING OF PAMPHLET PURPORTEDLY ISSUED BY DISSIDENT FATAH STRUGGLE COUNCIL, WE FIND LITTLE IF ANYTHING IN IT THAT SYRIA COULD TAKE ISSUE WITH, WHICH TENDS TO SUPPORT SURMISE BY AL-BAATH CORRESPONDENT THAT IT CONFIDENTIAL

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REFLECTS VIEWS OF PALESTINIAN FACTION CLOSELY ALLIED TO SARG. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOWEVER, (A) WHERE INDEED PAMPHLET WAS ISSUED BY TRUE FATAH DISSIDENTS, OR ANOTHER PALESTINIAN GROUP, OR AS A PROVOCATION AND (B) WHETHER ITS INTENT IS MERELY TO PUT PRESSURE ON ARAFAT TO WEEK RECONCILIATION WITH SYRIA OR TO MOUNT CAMPAIGN TO REPLACE HIM.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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